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Intervention and Exploitation: US and UK Government International Actions Since 1945

Caribbean



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Cuba

Summary

1898-1933: US control and influence until revolution.
1934: US encouraged take over.
1944: Grau San Martin President.
1952: US backs dictatorship.
1956: Guerrilla war.
1959: Castro leads revolution.
1959 onwards: US embargo and attacks.
1961: US directed invasion fails.
1962: Cuban Missile Crisis.
1965: Cuba aids Congo rebels.
1976-1981: Cuba aids Angola rebels and Ethiopia.
1976: Cubana airliner blown up.
1991: Soviet advisers leave Cuba.
1998: Cuba provides medical aid.
2000: US allows food and medicine.
2002: Torture at Guantanamo.
2006: Castro ill.
2007: US frees terrorist. UN votes against US sanctions again.

1898:

US defeats Spain, which gives up all claims to Cuba and cedes it to the US. [3] [30]

1902:

Cuba becomes independent with Tomas Estrada Palma as its president; however, the Platt Amendment keeps the island under US protection and gives the US the right to intervene in Cuban affairs. As Theodore Roosevelt put it "There is, of course, little or no independence left Cuba under the Platt Amendment... the only consistent thing to do now is to seek annexation. This, however, will take some time, and during the period which Cuba maintains her own government, it is most desirable that she should be able to maintain such a one as will tend to her advancement and betterment. She cannot make certain treaties without our consent ... and must maintain certain sanitary conditions ..., from all of which it is quite apparent that she is absolutely in our hands, and I believe that no European government for a moment considers that she is otherwise than a practical dependency of the United States, and as such is certainly entitled to our consideration. ... With the control which we have over Cuba, a control which will soon undoubtedly become possession, ... we shall soon practically control the sugar trade of the world. ... the island will ... gradually become Americanized and we shall have in time one of the richest and most desirable possessions in the world." [3] [30]

1903:

The US acquires a lease on Guantanamo Bay and Bahia Honda to establish naval bases there. [30]

1906-1909:

Estrada resigns and the US occupies Cuba following a rebellion led by Jose Miguel Gomez. [3]

1909:

Jose Miguel Gomez becomes president following elections supervised by the US, but is soon tarred by corruption. [3]

1912:

US forces return to Cuba to help put down black protests against discrimination. [3] [30]

The US relinquishes Bahia Honda in exchange for enlarging the Guantanamo base. [30]

1924:

Gerardo Machado institutes vigorous measures, forwarding mining, agriculture and public works, but subsequently establishing a brutal dictatorship. [3]

1925:

Socialist Party founded, forming the basis of the Communist Party. [3]

1933:

The Machado regime falls to a popular movement and a provisional government lead by professor of physiology, Ramón Grau San Martín, is installed. [30]

1934:

January - Encouraged by the US Batista and Caffery take over and Mendieta is installed as president. [30] [31]

June - The US abandons its right to intervene in Cuba's internal affairs, repealing the Platt Amendment, revises Cuba's sugar quota and changes tariffs to favour Cuba. Guantanamo Naval Base is retained by the US. [3] [30]

1940:

Batista is elected President. [31]

1944:

Batista retires and is succeeded by the civilian Ramón Grau San Martín. [3] [31]

1952:

Coup led by Batista overthrows elected government of Carlos Prío Socarrás. Fulgencio Batista's ruthless regime and his secret police force, the Buro de Represión Actividades Comunistas (BRAC) - created by the CIA in 1956, tortures and kills thousands with full US backing. [1] [31]

1953:

Fidel Castro leads an unsuccessful revolt against the Batista regime. [3]

1956:

Castro lands in eastern Cuba from Mexico and takes to the Sierra Maestra mountains where, aided by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, he wages a guerrilla war. [3]

1957-1958:

During this period the CIA channels funds to Castro's movement, whilst also supporting Batista. Presumably the CIA was hedging its bets.[5]

1958:

The US withdraws military aid to Batista. [3]

1959:

January - 2nd - Castro leads a 9,000-strong guerrilla army into Havana, forcing Batista to flee. Castro becomes prime minister, his brother, Raul, becomes his deputy and Guevara becomes third in command. [3]

7th - US recognises Castro's Government and expresses the good will of the US. [7]

Fidel Castro came to power at the beginning of 1959. A U.S. National Security Council meeting of March 10, 1959 included on its agenda the feasibility of bringing "another government to power in Cuba." There followed 40 years of terrorist attacks, bombings, full-scale military invasion, sanctions, embargoes, isolation, assassinations...Cuba had carried out The Unforgivable Revolution, a very serious threat of setting a "good example" in Latin America. [2] [5]

The saddest part of this is that the world will never know what kind of society Cuba could have produced if left alone, if not constantly under the gun and the threat of invasion, if allowed to relax its control at home. The idealism, the vision, the talent were all there. But we'll never know. And that of course was the idea. [2] [5]

Continuing an old feud, that being that Cuba belongs to the United States and not Cubans, the US has continued intervening on its own behalf in Cuba. As compared to Cubans acting on their own behalf in Cuba. Despite their best bungling efforts the CIA's attempts to overthrow Fidel Castro (with 6 failed assassination attempts between '61-63), have all failed. Sabatoge and terrorist attacks continue until 1966. US embargos, continuing long past the end of the cold war, strangle the Cuban economy and deprive all but the highest American elites of fine Cuban cigars. To be fair to Cuba it rates somewhere around 3rd or 4th in the Western hemisphere on basic human development indicators, its infant mortality rate is in fact lower than that of the United States. On human rights it's useful to compare notes on Cuba versus the United States and the top recipient in the hemisphere of US military aid, Colombia, before trying to explain or justify US policy against Cuba as a response to Castro's human rights abuses. [1] [5]

Not only did the US later institute a total trade and credit embargo they also pressured other countries to conform and paid manufacturers to supply faulty goods. They also contaminated goods leaving Cuba and facilitated the infection of Cuba livestock with various fatal viruses. [5]

June - A group of Dominican exiles launch an invasion of their homeland from Cuba. The invasion fails completely. [5]

August - About 30 Haitians and Cubans sail from Cuba to Haiti to overthrow the US backed Duvalier dictatorship. With US help they are defeated. [5]

October - Planes based in the US make bombing and strafing attacks on Cuba. [5]

The CIA chief, Allen Dulles, urges Britain not to sell arms to Cuba so that would have to buy them from the USSR. This would make action against Cuba more easy to sell to the public. [6]

28th - Turkey and the US sign an agreement for the deployment of 15 nuclear Jupiter missiles in Turkey. [7]

1960:

There are several fire bomb air raids on Cuban cane fields and sugar mills. US pilots took part and the US admits that at least one plane took off from Florida, but says it doesn't condone the attacks. [5] [6]

February - USSR and Cuba negotiate economic and trade agreements that help reduce Cuban economic dependence on the US. [7]

March - President Eisenhower approves the idea of invading Cuba. A total trade and economic embargo of Cuba is instituted forcing Cuba to turn more and more to the Soviet Union. [5] [6]

A freighter unloading munitions from Belgium explodes in Havana killing more than 75 people. The US denies involvement, but admits it had tried to stop the shipment. [5]

May - The Soviet Union and Cuba establish diplomatic relations. [7]

July - Cuba appeals to the UN for help in resolving, through diplomatic channels, the issue of the bombing raids carried out against Cuba by planes from the US. [7]

The US suspends the Cuban sugar quota, effectively cutting off 80% of Cuban exports to the US. The following day the Soviet Union agrees to buy sugar previously destined for the US market. [7]

August - The first assassination plot by the US against Fidel Castro is initiated when a CIA official is given a box of Castro's favourite cigars and told to poison them. This is one of at least eight assassination plots against Castro by the US between 1960 and 1965 according to a 1975 Senate investigation. [7] [28] [29]

The US imposes an embargo on trade with Cuba. [7]

September - The first large Soviet Bloc arms shipment arrives in Cuba. Soviet Bloc personnel begin to be employed as military instructors, advisers and technicians. [7]

October - All US businesses in Cuba are nationalised without compensation; US breaks off diplomatic relations with Havana. [3] [7]

December - Cuba and the Soviet Union issue a joint communiqué in which Cuba openly aligns itself with the Soviet Union and indicates its solidarity with the Sino-Soviet Bloc. [7]

1961:

January - After Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev says that the US is preparing an attack on Cuba the US and Cuba sever diplomatic relations. [7]

Arthur Schlesinger advises Kennedy of the danger of Cuba's example "the poor and underprivileged, stimulated by the example of the Cuban revolution, are now demanding opportunities for a decent living." [6]

April - 12th - On the eve of the invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy decides that US armed forces will not take part. Any conflict that takes place, Kennedy tells his aides in private, will be "between the Cubans themselves." [7]

14th - Early in the morning a group of B-26 bombers piloted by Cuban exiles, US pilots flying for the CIA also took part, attack air bases in Cuba. The raid coordinated by the CIA, is designed to destroy as much of Cuba's air power as possible before the scheduled landing of US trained Cuban exiles. However, to keep the US connection from becoming public, an additional set of airstrikes on Cuban airfields is canceled. [5] [7]

17th-18th - With US direction, training and support, a group of about 1,400 Cuban exiles attempt an invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. Cuban aircraft that survived the earlier airstrikes are able to pin the invasion force on the beachhead and the invaders are quickly crushed by Cuban ground forces. [7] 100 exiles die and nearly 1,200 people are taken prisoner. The US had hoped that the Cubans would rise up and join the invaders, but the invaders were not welcome and no one joined them. [5] In response Castro orders the arrest of some 200,000 suspected dissidents. [7]

19th - In a memo for the president, Attorney General Robert Kennedy warns, "if we don't want Russia to set up missile bases in Cuba we had better decide now what we are willing to do to stop it.....something forceful and determined must be done....The time has come for a showdown for in a year or two years the situation will be vastly worse." [7]

Khrushchev assures President Kennedy that the Soviet Union "does not seek any advantages or privileges in Cuba. We do not have any bases in Cuba, and we do not intend to establish any." Khrushchev also warns against arming Cuban émigrés for future attacks on Cuba. Such a policy of "unreasonable actions is a slippery and dangerous road which can lead the world to a new global war." [7]

Raids against Cuba by exiles continue throughout the 1960's. The CIA supports the exiles from its Miami headquarters with a budget of \$50 million a year. [5] [7]

Castro proclaims Cuba a communist state and begins to ally it with the USSR. [3]

August - Che Guevara meets Richard Goodwin, President Kennedy's assistant special counsel in Uruguay. He offers that Cuba will forswear any political alliance with the Soviets, pay for confiscated US property and consider curbing support for leftist insurgencies in other countries. In return the US would drop all hostile action against Cuba. [5]

November - US initiates "Operation Mongoose" the umbrella name for the CIA's covert operations against Cuba. Task Force W, the CIA unit for Operation Mongoose subsequently involves about 400 Americans at CIA headquarters and its Miami station, in addition to about 2,000 Cubans, a private navy of speedboats and an annual budget of some \$50 million. Task Force W carries out a wide range of activities, mostly against Cuban ships and aircraft outside Cuba and non-Cuban ships engaged in Cuban trade, such as contaminating shipments of sugar from Cuba and tampering with industrial products imported into the country. It is intended that the project will result in an uprising against Castro leading to US military intervention by October 1962. [5] [6] [7]

1962:

January - A meeting of a US high level interagency group, the Special Group Augmented (SGA) concludes that the overthrow of Castro is possible "a solution to the Cuban problem today carries top priority in the US Gov. No time, money, effort or manpower is to be spared." [7]

February - The US Joint Chiefs of Staff establish a "first priority basis" for the completion of all contingency plans for military action against Cuba. [7]

March - Guidelines for Operation Mongoose are approved by the SGA. They note that the US would attempt to "make maximum use of indigenous resources" in trying to overthrow Fidel Castro but recognise that "final success will require US military intervention." Indigenous resources would act to "prepare and justify this intervention and thereafter to facilitate and support it." [7]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff submit the Operation Northwoods plan. The plan proposed actions to incriminate Cuba such as blowing up a US ship, hijacking planes and committing terrorism in US cities. The plan is rejected by the Kennedy administration. [8]

The US establishes a centre for interrogating Cuban immigrants and screening them for intelligence and counter intelligence potential. Most of the information gathered by this method proves to be false. [7]

The CIA finally succeeds in getting Ecuador to break off relations with Cuba. [5]

A US agency pays a Canadian agricultural technician to infect Cuban turkeys with a virus. 8,000 turkeys die. [5]

April - US Jupiter missiles in Turkey become operational. All positions are reported "ready and manned" by US personnel. [7]

Khrushchev conceives of the idea of deploying in Cuba similar weapons to those deployed by the US in Turkey. The reasons for considering such a plan are possibly: 1. to increase Soviet striking power which lags far behind the US; 2. to deter the US from invading Cuba; 3. to psychologically end the double standard by which the US stations missiles on the Soviet perimeter but denies the Soviets a reciprocal right. Some are opposed to the plan but Khrushchev has it evaluated. [7]

May - The US conducts military exercises designed to test contingency planning for Cuba. It is likely that the Soviets and Cuba view these as additional evidence of the US intention to invade Cuba. [7]

After conferring with Raúl Castro, Che Guevara, Osvaldo Dorticos and Blas Roca, Fidel Castro agrees to accept the deployment of Soviet nuclear weapons. [7]

July - Successes are reported to the SGA for Operation Mongoose such as the infiltration of 11 CIA guerilla teams into Cuba, including one team in Pinar del Río Province that has grown to as many as 250 men. [7]

August - The chairman of the SGA informs President Kennedy that the SGA sees no likelihood that the Castro government can be overthrown without direct US military intervention. Kennedy authorises the development of aggressive plans aimed at ousting Castro, but specifies that no overt US military involvement should be made part of those plans. [7]

Suspicious of the military buildup in Cuba, Kennedy orders plans to be made to deal with a situation in which Soviet nuclear missiles are deployed in Cuba. [7]

In a meeting with Khrushchev in the Crimea, Che Guevara urges Khrushchev to announce the missile deployment publicly, but he declines to do so. [7]

US spy planes show that eight defensive SAM missile sites and coastal defences are now in place in Cuba, none of them nuclear. [7]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) recommends full scale invasion as the only option to "eliminate any installations in Cuba capable of launching a nuclear attack on the US." [7]

September - Soviet elite troops probably start arriving in Cuba at this time, but the US is not aware of them yet. [7]

7th - US Tactical Air Command begins to make provision for a coordinated air attack against Cuba. [7]

11th - The Soviets publicly deny any intention of introducing offensive weapons into Cuba. [7]

15th - The first Soviet medium range ballistic missiles arrive in Cuba. [7]

20th - The US Senate passes a resolution sanctioning the use of force, if necessary, "to prevent the creation or use of an externally supported offensive military capability endangering the security of the US." The

House of Representatives approves a bill including amendments designed to cut off aid to any country permitting the use of its merchant ships to transport arms or goods of any kind to Cuba.[7]

21st - The Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko charges the US with whipping up "war hysteria" and threatening to invade Cuba. He warns that any US attack on Cuba or any Cuban bound ship would mean war. [7]

October - 1st - The US prepares for possible airstrikes against Cuba followed by invasion. [7]

14th - A US spy plane finds evidence of MRBM sites in Cuba. [7]

15th - The US steps up covert action against Cuba, especially sabotage and tries to find new ways of "getting rid of the Castro regime". Troops and matériel are made ready for a possible military strike. [7]

16th - The US concludes that the missiles are not yet operational and no nuclear warheads are present, and continues to discuss what action to take. Khrushchev assures the US ambassador that all Soviet activity in Cuba is defensive and criticises US bases in Turkey and Italy. [7]

17th - Adlai Stevenson expresses concern that world opinion would equate the US missiles in Turkey with the Soviet ones in Cuba. [7]

The US identifies a longer range IRBM site under construction in Cuba. [7]

18th - The US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) recommends airstrikes against Cuba, but Robert Kennedy and others are worried about the morality of such action, comparing it to a Pearl Harbour in reverse. Opinion leans towards a blockade instead. [7]

20th - Adlai Stevenson suggests offering withdrawing US missiles from Turkey and leaving Guantánamo as part of a settlement with the Soviets, but others say this concedes too much. [7]

21st - President Kennedy settles on the blockade plan, but Tactical Air Command (TAC) continues planning for massive airstrikes. Kennedy phones several national papers to stop them running stories about the crisis. [7]

22nd - The French and British pledge their support to the US blockade. [7]

The US puts its bombers on alert, including preparing 183 nuclear bombers and arming 161 Air Defense Command aircraft with nuclear weapons. US military forces worldwide go to DEFCON 3 status, except European forces since it is feared that this might weaken European support for the US. Kennedy publicly announces the presence of Soviet ballistic missiles in Cuba and the institution of the blockade of Cuba. [7]

The US turns its Jupiter nuclear missiles in Turkey over to Turkish command. [6] [7]

23rd - Khrushchev reiterates to Kennedy that the Soviet presence in Cuba is for defensive purposes. Castro also declares this publicly. Castro puts Cuban forces on alert. Soviet submarines move into the Caribbean. The US starts low altitude reconnaissance flights over Cuba. Moscow places the Warsaw Pact forces on alert. [7]

24th - Soviet cargo ships heading for the 500 mile blockade line slow down or turn around. Khrushchev threatens to sink US ships that stop Soviet ships. Two Soviet ships approach the line accompanied by a submarine. At this time the US have not announced where the line is. [7]

UN Secretary General U Thant issues a plea to Kennedy and Khrushchev on behalf of 40 nonaligned states, that arms shipments to Cuba and the blockade be voluntarily suspended. [7]

The US puts its forces on DEFCON 2 status. [7]

25th - US ships allow a Soviet tanker through the blockade. The Cuban authorities prevent the CIA from carrying out the sabotage of a copper mine in Cuba. [7]

Photographs of a missile site in Cuba, taken by US spy planes, are shown in the UN Security Council by Adlai Stevenson. And the difference between Soviet missiles in Cuba and US missiles in Turkey and elsewhere is what? As Kennedy himself said "It's just as if we suddenly began to put a major number of [medium range ballistic missiles] in Turkey.....Now that'd be goddam dangerous." His national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, responded: "Well, we did, Mr. President." [6]

26th - The US makes further plans for an invasion of Cuba and predicts heavy US casualties in that event. The US Ambassador to Turkey warns that Turkish officials will "deeply resent" any Turkey-for-Cuba missile trade. The US and Soviets begin to discuss the possibility of Soviet forces and missiles being withdrawn

from Cuba in exchange for the withdrawal of the US missiles from Turkey and a promise from the US not to invade Cuba. [7]

27th - A US spy plane from Alaska, apparently accidentally, flies into Soviet air space. US fighters are scrambled to assist the pilot. Soviet fighters are also scrambled. The spy plane leaves without shots being fired, but the US planes apparently were armed with nuclear air-to-air missiles. [7]

A US spy plane is shot down whilst flying over Cuba, the pilot is killed. Other reconnaissance planes are also fired upon, but are not brought down. To the disbelief of the Pentagon, Kennedy decides not to retaliate. [7]

The US proposes that if the Soviets remove their missiles from Cuba the US will subsequently pledge not to invade and that the US missiles in Turkey would be removed, but not publicly. [7] These missiles were due to be replaced by Polaris nuclear submarines in any case. [6]

Castro offers to have work at the missile sites stopped if the US lifted the blockade. He also invites U Thant to Cuba. U Thant accepts the invitation. [7]

With Soviet submarines under attack by US destroyers Vasili Arkhipov, a Soviet submarine officer blocks an order to fire nuclear armed torpedoes. In all probability he saved us from a nuclear war. [6]

28th - Khrushchev makes a radio broadcast in which he says orders have been given for the dismantling of the missile sites and the return of the missiles to the Soviet Union. The broadcast effectively ends the crisis, although some in the US JCS still want to attack Cuba. Castro is reportedly angry that Khrushchev had not consulted him before making the announcement. The US suspends reconnaissance operations over Cuba. [7]

Castro demands five points be conceded by the US to substantiate their assurance of non aggression against Cuba: an end to the economic blockade against Cuba; an end to all subversive activities carried out from the US against Cuba; a halt to all attacks on Cuba carried out from the US military bases on the island of Puerto Rico; the cessation of aerial and naval reconnaissance flights in Cuban airspace and waters; and the return of Guantánamo naval base to Cuba. [7]

29th - The US resumes reconnaissance flights over Cuba. The JCS modifies its invasion plans so that US invasion forces will be armed with nuclear capable weapons. Kennedy refuses to put in writing his pledge to remove the US Jupiter missiles from Turkey. [7]

30th - Khrushchev requests that the US lift the blockade of Cuba and the economic blockade. He also suggests the US withdraw from Guantánamo and suggest they finalise agreements on the cessation of nuclear weapons testing. [7]

Operation Mongoose is halted, but some sabotage teams have already been sent to Cuba. [7]

U Thant arrives in Cuba and discussion about verifying the removal of the Soviet missiles begin. [7]

Resolutions are adopted by the Organisation of American States (OAS) excluding Cuba "from participation in the inter-American system" and prohibiting OAS members from selling arms to Cuba and setting measures for collective defense against Cuban activities in the hemisphere. [7]

31st - Castro threatens to fire on US reconnaissance flights. [7]

November - 1st - Reconnaissance shows that the missile sites are all either dismantled or partially so. [7]

2nd - Castro, still fearing a US invasion, agrees to the Soviet missile withdrawal after receiving assurances from Moscow, including the pledge to keep a Soviet combat brigade on the island. [7]

3rd - The US presses for the Soviets to remove bombers and missile boats from Cuba as well as the missiles. [7]

7th - The US drops its insistence on the withdrawal of the missile boats. [7]

8th - One of the Operation Mongoose teams dispatched before the operation was shut down blows up a Cuban industrial facility, but it is never raised in the US-Soviet talks. Several hundred are said to have died. [6] [7]

9th - The last of the MRBM missiles leaves the island and the US is allowed to inspect the ships carrying them. [7]

12th - Kennedy decides to accept Khrushchev's word on the Soviet bombers and not insist on their immediate removal. [7]

14th - Khrushchev says the bombers can be removed in 2-3 months and complains that the US is still conducting flights over Cuba, that the blockade is still in place and that the noninvasion pledge still isn't confirmed. [7]

16th - The US practices amphibious landings as a rehearsal for invading Cuba. The US now has ready 100,000 army troops, 40,000 marines, 14,500 paratroopers, 550 combat aircraft and 180 ships. [7]

18th - The US continues to push for the removal of the Soviet bombers. [7]

19th - Kennedy warns the French, German and British leaders that the US may take further action, possibly air attacks, if the Soviet bombers are not withdrawn. [7]

Castro tells U Thant that he will not object if the Soviets remove the bombers and the crisis is ended. [7]

20th - Khrushchev agrees to remove the bombers. The physical blockade is lifted and low altitude reconnaissance flights canceled. The alert status of US forces is reduced. Kennedy verbally commits to peace if Cuba doesn't acquire offensive weapons in the future. The Warsaw Pact forces are returned to a normal status of readiness. [7]

December - Kennedy publicly confirms that both missiles and bombers have been removed from Cuba. The noninvasion pledge by the US is never formally confirmed. Khrushchev again suggests stopping all nuclear testing. Agreement for a limited test ban is eventually reached in August 1963. [7]

1963:

January - Italy and Turkey announce that the IRBMs stationed in their countries will be phased out. [7]

Operation Mongoose is abolished but its Task Force W continues to operate as the Special Affairs Staff at the CIA's Miami station. Covert operations against Castro continue, including assassination attempts and disruption of the Cuban government and economy. [6] [7]

March - The anti-Castro group L-66 sinks the Soviet ship *Baku* as it loads sugar in the harbour of Caibarien, Cuba. The ship *L'Gov* was attacked a week earlier. [7]

April - Polaris nuclear submarines are deployed in the Mediterranean and the last Jupiter missiles are withdrawn from Turkey. [7]

June - Kennedy approves a new set of sabotage operations against Cuba. [7]

1964:

October - A cargo ship carrying buses from the UK to Cuba is involved in a collision. This was later said to be the work of the CIA and British intelligence. [5]

November - The US attempts to assassinate Castro by bombing a stadium where he is speaking. The B-26 bomber is driven off by anti-aircraft fire. [5]

December - A bazooka is fired at the UN building in New York in an attempt on Che Guevara's life. [5]

1965:

Cuba's sole political party renamed the Cuban Communist Party. [3]

About 100 Cuban revolutionaries, including Che Guevara, go to the Congo to aid rebels there against the US backed regime. They return a few months later in disgust at the low level of revolutionary zeal. [5]

The US ends its campaign of destructive covert action, or terrorism, against Cuba. [6]

1969:

Under Nixon the US intensifies its covert operations against Cuba. [6]

1970's:

Cuban exile groups carry out over 100 attacks on Soviet and Cuban targets in the USA. They also attack other Cuban exiles who suggest any rapprochement with Cuba. US officialdom makes no attempt to stop them and often aids them. [5] [6]

1970:

The Twentieth Century Fund of New York concludes of Cuba that "In education and public health, no country in Latin America has carried out such ambitious and nationally comprehensive programs. Cuba's centrally planned economy has done more to integrate the rural and urban sectors (through a national income distribution policy) than the market economies of the other Latin American countries." [5]

1971:

The CIA hand Cuban exiles a virus which causes African swine fever. Six weeks later an outbreak of the disease in Cuban leads to the slaughter of 500,000 pigs. [5]

Santiago Alvarez, a Cuban who fled after the revolution, takes part in a machine gun attack on a Cuban fishing village, killing two people and wounding three. As a wealthy real estate mogul Alvarez later backs Luis Posada and other terrorists. [9]

1972:

Cuba becomes a full member of the Soviet-based Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. [3]

1976-1981:

Cuba sends troops first to help Angola's left-wing MPLA withstand a joint onslaught by South Africa assisted by the CIA, Unita and the FNLA and, later, to help the Ethiopian regime defeat the US backed Eritreans and Somalis. [1] [3] [6]

1976:

Cuban Communist Party approves a new socialist constitution; Castro elected president. [3]

October - A Cubana Airlines plane is blown up after it takes off from Barbados. 73 people die. The CIA had been forewarned of such an attack being carried out by a group led by Orlando Bosch, but took no action. Bosch's group claimed responsibility for the attack. Luis Posada Carriles, a former CIA asset, was also part of the group and was convicted and imprisoned in Venezuela. He later escaped with the help of Jorge Mas Canosa, a Miami businessman. Thereafter he worked for the US helping to organise terrorist attacks against Nicaragua under the direction of Oliver North. [5] [6] [9] [10] [11]

1980:

Around 125,000 Cubans, many of them released convicts, flee to the US. [3]

An organisation of Cuban exiles called Omega 7, based in Union City, New Jersey is described by the FBI as "the most dangerous terrorist organisation in the United States". [5]

1981:

A dengue fever outbreak kills 158. The testimony of a Cuban exile later suggests that this was another US biological warfare operation. [5]

The US claims there are Cuban troops in El Salvador. There is no evidence for this, as usual. [5]

The Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF) is founded. Based in the USA they go on to mount numerous terrorist attacks against Cuba, including assassination attempts upon Castro. [16]

1982:

Cuba, together with other Latin American states, gives Argentina moral support in its dispute with Britain over the Falkland islands. [3]

Cuba is added to the US list of "terrorist states". [6]

1983:

While Orlando Bosch is in prison in Venezuela charged with the bombing of the Cubana Airlines plane in 1976, the City Commission of Miami proclaims "Dr. Orlando Bosch Day". [5]

When the US invades Grenada it declares it has rescued them from a Cuban/Soviet takeover. This is, of course, complete nonsense based on nothing. [5]

1988:

Cuba agrees to withdraw its troops from Angola following an agreement with South Africa. [3]

Freed from prison in Venezuela Orlando Bosch, the terrorist responsible for the 1976 Cubana Airlines bombing among other attacks, takes refuge in the US. The Justice Department tries to have him deported, but is blocked by President Bush. [5]

1989:

Orlando Bosch is granted a US presidential pardon by George Bush, overruling the Justice Department. [6]

1990:

Cuba and Yemen are the only countries to vote against the US backed UN resolutions imposing sanctions against Iraq and getting "authorisation" for war after its invasion of Kuwait. [5]

1991:

Soviet military advisers leave Cuba following the collapse of the USSR. [3]

1992:

A Miami based group performs a machine gun attack on a tourist hotel. [6]

1993:

The US tightens its embargo on Cuba, which introduces some market reforms in order to stem the deterioration of its economy. These include the legalisation of the US dollar, the transformation of many state farms into semi-autonomous cooperatives, and the legalisation of limited individual private enterprise. [3]

1994:

Cuba signs an agreement with the US according to which the US agrees to admit 20,000 Cubans a year in return for Cuba halting the exodus of refugees. [3]

The US Guantanamo Bay Naval Base is used as a support station for the invasion of Haiti. [30]

1996:

US trade embargo made permanent and more stringent after Cuba's shooting down of two US aircraft operated by Miami-based Cuban exiles. [3]

1997:

Miami based attackers directed by Luis Posada Carriles perform bombing attacks, one of which kills an Italian tourist. [6] [19]

The EU calls on the WTO to condemn the US embargo on Cuba. The US then withdraws from the talks. [6]

1998:

Pope John Paul II visits Cuba. [3]

Cuba starts to provide large scale medical aid around the world. Since this time thousands of Cuban medical staff have and continue to provide free medical assistance and training. [14]

The US eases restrictions on the sending of money to relatives by Cuban Americans. [3]

Cuba gives the US information on a Miami based terrorist group it had infiltrated. Three months later the FBI arrests five Cubans who had infiltrated the US based terrorist groups and imprisons them. They become known as the "Cuban Five". [6] [32]

1999:

The US eases sanctions against all countries on its list of "terrorist states" except Cuba. [6]

2000:

October - US House of Representatives approves the sale of food and medicines to Cuba. [3]

December - Russian President Vladimir Putin visits Cuba and signs accords aimed at boosting bilateral ties. [3]

2001:

October - Cuba angrily criticises Russia's decision to shut down the the Lourdes radio-electronic centre on the island, saying President Putin took the decision as "a special gift" to US President George W Bush ahead of a meeting between the two. [3]

November - US exports food to Cuba for the first time in more than 40 years after a request from the Cuban government to help it cope with the aftermath of Hurricane Michelle. [3]

December - The US convicts the Cuban Five, sentencing them to from 10 years to life in prison. [32]

2002:

January - Prisoners taken during US-led action in Afghanistan are flown into Guantanamo Bay for interrogation as al-Qaeda suspects. The prisoners are accorded no rights and Guantanamo Bay becomes a byword for cruelty and injustice. [3] [5] [30]

Russia's last military base in Cuba, at Lourdes, closes down. [3]

April - Diplomatic crisis after the UN Human Rights Commission again criticises Cuba's rights record. The resolution is sponsored by Uruguay and supported by many of Cuba's former allies including Mexico.

Uruguay breaks off ties with Cuba after Castro says it is a US lackey. [3]

May - US Under Secretary of State John Bolton accuses Cuba of trying to develop biological weapons, adding the country to Washington's list of "axis of evil" countries. [3] [4]

Former US president Jimmy Carter makes a goodwill visit which includes a tour of scientific centres, in response to US allegations about biological weapons. Carter is the first former or serving US president to visit Cuba since the 1959 revolution. [3]

June - The National Assembly amends the constitution to make the socialist system of government permanent and untouchable. Castro called for the vote following criticisms from US President George W Bush. [3]

2003:

March-April - Crackdown on dissidents draws international condemnation. Seventy-five people are jailed for terms of up to 28 years; three men who hijacked a ferry in an attempt to reach the US are executed. [3]

June - EU halts high-level official visits to Cuba in protest at the country's recent human rights record. [3]

2004:

April - UN Human Rights Commission censures Cuba over its rights record. Cuban foreign minister describes resolution - which passed by single vote - as "ridiculous". [3]

May - US sanctions restrict US-Cuba family visits and cash remittances from expatriates. [3]

President Bush announces plans for the take over of Cuba. [12]

October - President Castro announces ban on transactions in US dollars, and imposes 10% tax on dollar-peso conversions. [3]

2005:

January - Havana says it is resuming diplomatic contacts with the EU, frozen in 2003 following a crackdown on dissidents. [3]

May - Around 200 dissidents hold a public meeting, said by organisers to be the first such gathering since the 1959 revolution. [3]

July - Hurricane Dennis causes widespread destruction and leaves 16 people dead. [3]

2006:

February - Propaganda war in Havana as President Castro unveils a monument which blocks the view of illuminated messages - some of them about human rights - displayed on the US mission building. [3]

July - President Fidel Castro undergoes gastric surgery and temporarily hands over control of the government to his brother, Raul. [3]

The US issues a report on its continued support for those trying to overthrow the government of Cuba. Most of it is classified. [15]

September - The US funding of anti Castro propaganda is revealed. [17]

October - The US further tightens sanctions against Cuba. [18]

And they still don't want to prosecute Luis Posada Carriles, who is now back in the US. [19]

November - Swiss banks UBS and Credit Suisse cut off business dealings with Cuba after US pressure. [20]
Anti Cuban Terrorist Santiago Alvarez is sentenced in Miami to four years in prison for weapons possession. [21]

December - Fidel Castro's failure to appear at a parade to mark the 50th anniversary of his return to Cuba from exile prompts renewed speculation about his future. [3]

A US Congresswoman calls for Castro to be assassinated. [22]

2007:

April - A lawyer and a journalist are given lengthy jail terms after secret trials. [3]

Spain reinstates aid to Cuba. [23]

Luis Posada Carriles is released on bail by a US federal judge. [24] The US government tries to bar him from talking about his CIA connections. [25]

May - Castro fails to appear at Havana's annual May Day parade. Days later he says he has had several operations. [3]

Anger as the US drops charges against veteran anti-Castro militant Luis Posada Carriles, who is a former CIA operative and Cuba's "Public Enemy No. 1" accused of downing a Cuban airliner. [3] [26]

June - The CIA declassifies some of "The Family Jewels" documents detailing illegal actions by the CIA between 1959 and 1973, including an attempt to assassinate Castro. [28] [29]

July - First time since 1959 that Revolution Day is celebrated without Castro present. [3]

Castro issues statement on first anniversary of power handover saying he is fighting for full recovery. [3]

President Bush announces further funding for opposition groups in Cuba. [13]

August - The Cuban Five launch an appeal against their conviction in 2001. [32]

October - For the 16th consecutive year the UN votes to have the US lift the sanctions against Cuba and is ignored. [33] [34] [36]

November - The UN praises Cuba for making sure everyone in Cuba has food to eat. [35]

Jamaica

1976-1980:

CIA backs unsuccessful military coup of Michael Manley in 1976. Related activity leaves some 750 dead.

Destabilizing trade measures and interference in elections leads to Manley's defeat in 1980. Manley returns to office in 1989 after he adopts Washington Consensus approved economic programs. [1]

Haiti

Summary

1915: US invades.

1934-1947: US fiscal control.

1956: Duvalier seizes power.

1971: Duvalier succeeded by son.

1986: Duvalier flees Haiti.

1988: Coup.

1990: Aristide elected president in Haiti's first democratic election.

1991: Aristide ousted in a coup backed by the US.

1991-1994: Military rule. FRAPH death squad funded by US.

1993: UN imposes sanctions.

1994: Aristide returns under US conditions.
1996: Preval becomes president.
1999: Preval rules by decree.
2000: Aristide elected president again. US declares embargo.
2001: Apparent coup attempt.
2003: Voodoo recognised.
2004: US supported coup ousts Aristide.

1915:

US invades Haiti following black-mulatto friction, which it thought endangered its property and investments in the country. [1]

1934:

US withdraws troops from Haiti, but maintains fiscal control until 1947. [1]

1956:

Voodoo physician Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier seizes power in military coup and is elected president a year later. [1]

1964:

Duvalier declares himself president-for-life and establishes a dictatorship with the help of the Tontons Macoute militia. [1]

1971:

Duvalier dies and is succeeded by his 19-year-old son, Jean-Claude, or "Baby Doc", who also declares himself president-for-life. [1]

1986:

Baby Doc flees Haiti in the wake of mounting popular discontent and is replaced by Lieutenant-General Henri Namphy as head of a governing council. [1]

1988:

Leslie Manigat becomes president, but is ousted in a coup led by Brigadier-General Prosper Avril, who installs a civilian government under military control. [1]

1990:

Jean-Bertrand Aristide elected president with two thirds of the vote. This is Haiti's first democratic election. [2]

1991:

Aristide ousted in a coup led by Brigadier-General Raoul Cedras. This coup is backed by the US. Organisation of American States (OAS) imposes embargo and sanctions, but US declares 800 US firms exempt so that US trade actually increases by 50%. [3] [6]

1991-1994:

Military rule with many human rights atrocities. Paramilitary death squad FRAPH funded by US. [3] [4]

1993:

UN imposes sanctions after the Haitian military regime rejected an accord facilitating Aristide's return. [1]

1994:

Haitian military regime relinquishes power in the face of an imminent US invasion. US returns Aristide to power, but forces him to accept structural adjustment favourable to US corporations operating in Haiti. [5] US also removed documents connecting it with FRAPH. [4]

1995:

UN peacekeepers begin to replace US troops; Aristide supporters win parliamentary elections; Rene Preval elected in December to replace Aristide as president. [1]

1996:

Preval sworn in as president. [1]

1997-99:

Serious political deadlock; new government named. [1]

1999:

Preval declares that parliament's term has expired and begins ruling by decree following a series of disagreements with deputies. [1]

2000:

November - Aristide elected president for a second non-consecutive term, with more than 90% of the vote. OAS declares the election as flawed, but the International Coalition of Independent Observers says they were fair. President Clinton declares embargo. [7]

2001:

July - Presidential spokesman accuses former army officers of trying to overthrow the government after armed men attack three locations, killing four police officers. [1]

December - 30 armed men try to seize the National Palace in an apparent coup attempt; 12 people are killed in the raid, which the government blames on former army members. [1]

2002:

July - Haiti is approved as a full member of the Caribbean Community (Caricom) trade bloc. [1]

2003:

April - Voodoo recognised as a religion, on a par with other faiths. [1]

July - Inter-American Development Bank resumes loan programme, raising hopes for further international support. [1]

2004:

January - Celebrations marking 200 years of independence marred by violence and protests against President Aristide's rule. [1]

February - Uprising against Mr Aristide intensifies. Rebels seize a number of towns and cities. Dozens are killed in escalating violence. Mr Aristide goes into exile. Coup was again supported by the US, using former FRAPH members to execute it. Aristide claims he was forced to leave by the US. [3] [8] [9] [10] [11]

Dominican Republic

1963-1966:

In February 1963, Juan Bosch took office as the first democratically elected president of the Dominican Republic since 1924. Here at last was John F. Kennedy's liberal anti-Communist, to counter the charge that the U.S. supported only military dictatorships. Bosch's government was to be the long sought "showcase of democracy" that would put the lie to Fidel Castro. He was given the grand treatment in Washington shortly before he took office.

Bosch was true to his beliefs. He called for land reform, low-rent housing, modest nationalization of business, and foreign investment provided it was not excessively exploitative of the country and other

policies making up the program of any liberal Third World leader serious about social change. He was likewise serious about civil liberties: Communists, or those labeled as such, were not to be persecuted unless they actually violated the law.

A number of American officials and congresspeople expressed their discomfort with Bosch's plans, as well as his stance of independence from the United States. Land reform and nationalization are always touchy issues in Washington, the stuff that "creeping socialism" is made of. In several quarters of the U.S. press Bosch was red-baited.

In September, the military boots marched. Bosch was out. The United States, which could discourage a military coup in Latin America with a frown, did nothing.

Nineteen months later, a revolt broke out which promised to put the exiled Bosch back into power. The United States sent 23,000 troops to help crush it. Over 4,000 Dominicans are killed. [1] [2]

Puerto Rico

1950: Independence rebellion crushed in Ponce. [1]

Grenada

Summary

1885-1962: Grenada controlled by British.

1967: Grenada partly autonomous. Foreign and defence affairs still under British control.

1974: Grenada independent. Post-independence period plagued by corruption, extremism and political thuggery.

1979: Coup brings Maurice Bishop to power, who proceeds to strengthen ties with Cuba and US.

US works to destabilise government.

1983: Bishop ousted and executed.

US invades. British government privately furious, but publicly backs intervention.

1984: New US supported government runs brutal regime.

1991: Coalition government.

2000: Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

2001: Government begins review of offshore banking.

2004: 90% of island devastated by hurricane.

1885-1958:

Grenada acts as administrative headquarters of the British Windward Islands. [1]

1950:

Grenada United Labour Party founded by Eric Gairy. [1]

1958-62:

Grenada is part of the British-sponsored Federation of the West Indies. [1]

1967:

Grenada becomes autonomous, with foreign and defence affairs remaining under British control. [1]

1974:

Grenada becomes independent with Gairy as prime minister. [1]

The post-independence period is plagued by corruption, extremism and political thuggery. [6]

1979:

Gairy ousted in coup organised by the leftist New Jewel Movement and led by Maurice Bishop, who proceeds to strengthen ties with Cuba and the US. [1]

The policies of Maurice Bishop and his followers policies were not as revolutionary as Castro's, but Washington was again driven by its fear of "another Cuba," particularly when public appearances by the Grenadian leaders in other countries of the region met with great enthusiasm. U.S. destabilization tactics against the Bishop government began soon after the coup and continued until 1983, featuring numerous acts of disinformation and dirty tricks. [3] [4]

1983:

Bishop ousted and executed by former left-wing allies led by General Hudson Austin, who objected to his attempts to improve ties with the United States; coup provides pretext for an invasion by the US; Austin arrested; Interim Advisory Council reinstates 1974 constitution. [1][5]

British government privately furious at US failure to consult in invasion of Commonwealth country, but publicly backs intervention. [2]

The American invasion met minimal resistance, although the U.S. suffered 135 killed or wounded; there were also some 400 Grenadian casualties, and 84 Cubans, mainly construction workers. [3]

1984:

At the end of 1984, a questionable election was held which was won by a man supported by the Reagan administration. One year later, the human rights organization, Council on Hemispheric Affairs, reported that Grenada's new U.S.-trained police force and counter-insurgency forces had acquired a reputation for brutality, arbitrary arrest, and abuse of authority, and were eroding civil rights. [3]

1989:

Blaize remains prime minister after being replaced as head of the NNP; he later dies and is replaced by Ben Jones. [1]

April - The government issued a list of more than 80 books which were prohibited from being imported. Four months later, the prime minister suspended parliament to forestall a threatened no-confidence vote resulting from what his critics called "an increasingly authoritarian style." [3]

1991:

Coalition government headed by Nicholas Braithwaite, of the centrist National Democratic Congress (NDC) takes office after an inconclusive general election. [1]

1995:

February - Agriculture Minister George Brizan becomes prime minister after resignation of Braithwaite. [1]

June - Keith Mitchell becomes prime minister after his NNP wins general elections with comfortable majority. [1]

1999:

Prime Minister Keith Mitchell's NNP wins landslide in general elections, taking all 15 seats in parliament. [1]

2000:

April - Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up with South African help to examine political upheavals of the "Revolutionary Years" between 1976 to 1983. [1]

September - Three Chinese diplomats on a private visit are deported for statements construed as interference in the internal affairs of Grenada. They were invited by the newly-formed Grenada-China friendship association of opposition leader Michael Baptiste. [1]

2001:

Grenada blacklisted by Paris-based Financial Action Task Force for not doing enough to tackle money-laundering. Government begins review of offshore banking. [1]

Opposition criticises government for establishing diplomatic ties with Libya and for Prime Minister Mitchell's trip to Tripoli. He went as part of an Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) delegation seeking economic help after a drop-off in aid from the US, UK. [1]

December - Canada imposes visa regime on holders of Grenada passports, which can be bought, over security fears following 11 September attacks. Grenada had earlier suspended sales to avoid awarding citizenship to terrorists. [1]

December - Underwater volcano Kick'em Jenny off the Grenada coast erupts, but does not break the water's surface. [1]

2002:

February - Paris-based Financial Action Task Force removes Grenada from blacklist of countries said to be insufficiently cooperative in fight against money-laundering. [1]

Major organic banana project launched in an effort to boost the industry; 150 acres are set aside for organic cultivation. [1]

2003:

June - US Treasury Department's financial crimes agency withdraws its 2002 advisory on Grenada as efforts continue to clean-up offshore banking. [1]

November - Prime Minister Keith Mitchell narrowly wins a third term in office. [1]

2004:

September - Grenada takes a direct hit from Hurricane Ivan - the country's worst hurricane in living memory. Prime Minister Mitchell declares a national disaster; he says the island is 90% devastated. [1]